

MEDIA STATEMENT - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEHAWU CALLS ON GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO IMMEDIATELY ADDRESS THE ISSUES OF STUDENT NURSES

Wednesday January 17, 2018

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] calls on the Gauteng Department of Health to immediately sort out the issue of recruited student nurses who were supposed to start their training on January 15, 2018.

The department recruited 700 student nurses last year to be trained as part of the 2018 intake. These students received appointment letters last year confirming that they will commence their training programme in 2018. However, last week the students were notified via whatsapp messages that they cannot start with their training as communicated because the department has financial problems. This is an insult to these students who probably resigned from whatever part time jobs they had or had started preparing to be trained as nurses. This reckless act by the department is unacceptable and points to the lack of proper planning by the department of health.

The department needs student nurses so as to address the challenges of service delivery since the health sector has been plagued by understaffing.

This situation takes place at a very unfortunate time when many students are trying to access higher education. As a nation we need to prioritise the education and training of our youth in order to contribute to the skills revolution and safeguard a brighter future for our country.

Recently the department has lurched from crisis to crisis and this has mostly dealt a huge blow to the Gauteng community they are supposed to help with health services. The financial crisis in the department has led to the Life Esidimeni tragedy, the attachment of property by the sheriff of the court and the cutting of phone lines after failing to pay service providers.

A quick and effective financial turnaround strategy is needed in order to salvage the department. If the department continues on this downward spiral it will spell calamity for the community of Gauteng especially the working class. We call on the national Department of Health to pay close attention to this situation.

As NEHAWU, we are already engaging the national department to intervene in this situation to ensure there is an urgent solution to the crisis. We also believe the time has come for the country to deal with the difficult issue of concurrent functions between national and provincial health departments as part of broader transformation of the sector and to improve service delivery.

Issued by NEHAWU Secretariat

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